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NEW USDA INFORMATION DIRECTOR NAMED

John M. McClung, former head of information and legislative affairs for USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service, has been named director of USDA's Office of Information.

He succeeds Claude W. Gifford, who was named to the position of assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture.

McClung, appointed to his position by Wilmer Mizell, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for governmental and public affairs, came to USDA in 1981 after 10 years with Miller Publishing Company, an affiliate of ABC.

He was with Miller's agricultural publications, including FEEDSTUFFS magazine. McClung spent eight years as the publication's Washington Bureau chief. The native of Tucson, Ariz., also worked for UPI at one time.

Gifford, a 12-year veteran of USDA, will be responsible for special communications projects for the Office of the Secretary.

"As we look to the future of government involvement in agriculture, the importance of providing in-depth communications of farm policy has never been more apparent," Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block said.

"Claude's background speaks for itself. He is an expert in his ability to explain the complex issues of today's agriculture."

During his career with USDA, Gifford has had responsibilities in many areas of communications, including his service on the advisory committee to Cornell University's Department of Communications Arts. He also served as acting Assistant Secretary for governmental and public affairs for 1-1/2 years in 1981-82. Before coming to USDA, he held various editorial positions on FARM JOURNAL and TOP OP magazines.

Gifford, a native of Rock Island, Ill., has received the Presidential rank of meritorious executive and the USDA distinguished service award.

PRESS ASSOCIATION HONORS AG COMMUNICATOR

The North Carolina Press Association recently honored ag communicator Frank Jeter with its "outstanding and dedicated service" award.

Jeter retired last year after a long, distinguished career with USDA, ending as the Soil Conservation Service's public information officer in North Carolina. He considers the NCPA recognition a "signal honor" because it is only the second time in the long history of NCPA that it has given out the award.

USDA SATELLITE BROADCASTING PROMISING

USDA's Office of Information is studying and testing the desirability, feasibility and value of using satellites to distribute USDA radio and television materials. Two projects were completed in recent months.

OI's Radio and Television Division conducted a survey with all commercial television stations in the country.

Questions asked included: Would the station be interested in receiving USDA television programming via satellite, did the station have satellite capability, which satellite would be most easily accessed, and what time of the day would be best to access USDA television material from the satellite?

The questionnaire was sent to more than 700 stations. A follow-up mailing was sent after the first rush of returns. A total of more than 200 stations responded and over half (108) were definitely interested in receiving USDA television materials via satellite.

The second project was conducted over a 3-month period late last year. During that period, all USDA radio materials were made available via satellite to the 100-plus stations affiliated with the Brownfield Network of Centertown, Mo. The network has its own channel on Westar III communications satellite and provides all its information to affiliates on this channel.

USDA provided radio material on the same channel twice each day. News features and documentaries were put up on the "bird" each morning during a 20-minute feed, and news stories of the day were provided each afternoon during a 10-minute feed.

Jim Johnson, USDA radio and television chief, said the results were impressive. All the affiliated stations were surveyed twice during the project.

Their comments determined conclusively that the radio stations found the information valuable and timely, and of good technical quality--even though the material was sent to Brownfield Network via government FTS telephone lines using a Comrex encoder/decoder.

Several stations contacted the second time expressed disappointment that the project was ending and subsequently several subscribed to some of the Radio and Television Division's weekly USDA radio tape series. Some of the stations also started using the USDA call-in radio news service provided daily via telephone.

During the course of the radio satellite project, a number of other agricultural networks and satellite facilities expressed their interest in getting involved in some way. Brownfield Network was the first agricultural news network to go full-time on satellite.

Since then, several other networks are either totally on satellite or nearly so. In most cases, these networks have additional capacity available and are interested in selling that capacity.

Johnson says the goal is to begin a 5-year transition to satellite from present means of distributing USDA radio and television materials to stations and others.

The challenge will be to use a system that is compatible with the greatest percentage of stations and networks. He said more study is being done to determine what type of system this should be.

Anyone interested in more information about the USDA broadcasting projects and studies, or wanting to contribute information, may contact Johnson. His address is Radio and Television Division, Office of Information, Room 410-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or send message to Dialcom mailbox AGR007. His telephone is (202) 447-4330.

"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MR. WIZARD OR..."

Interest in a video production produced by the agricultural communications staff with the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station has been steady since its release a few months ago.

The title, "Whatever Happened to Mr. Wizard or, How Do We Really Find Out About Science?", itself is rather enticing. The half hour presentation documents the flow of science information from research laboratories to the public via mass media.

It can help agricultural researchers and communicators better understand the obstructions that occur in the communications process.

Five potential barriers are discussed: Peer review of research before release; who instigates the meeting between scientists and journalists; the degree of journalistic interpretation needed; checking stories back...for accuracy or style; and perceived errors.

Dave King, assistant editor for radio/television with the Oregon State University agricultural experiment station's communications staff, has offered a flyer and the complete script of the production for those who are interested.

He can be reached by writing to: Dave King, Agricultural Communications Staff, Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Oregon State University, AdS 416R, Corvallis, OR 97331, or by calling (503) 754-3615.

COMPUTER EXPO'84 & WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

Two upcoming computer training opportunities are coming up in Washington, D.C., that agricultural communicators in USDA, land grant universities and state departments of agriculture may want to attend.

The first is a hands-on workshop for government managers on using small computers. It is scheduled for June 4-6 in Alexandria, Va.

Three weeks later, June 26-29, the Government Computer Expo'84 will be held at the Sheraton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C.

During the 3-day microcomputer workshop, Middlesex Research Center staff members will teach the participants how to use desk top computers, such as the Apple IIe+ and IBM-PC.

A microcomputer will be available for each two or three attendees to ensure enough time on different machines, both to understand how they can be used in an office and to build confidence in each participant's ability to make the machines do what they want them to do.

The workshop fee is \$595 per participant, although 10 percent discounts are available for groups of three or more. For further information, call the Middlesex Research Center at (202) 342-1170.

Theme of the 4-day Expo'84 is "Integrating Microcomputer Technologies." President Reagan says the June 26-29 event "presents an opportunity to recognize the important part joint industry-government activities can play in improving government efficiency."

Registration fee for the conference and expo, which includes a one-day workshop on "microcomputers in government," is \$385 for government and \$460 for industry participants. A 10 percent discount is allowed for preregistration by May 25.

For additional information, contact GCE84 Conference, Dept. A, 1620 Elton Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903, or call (301) 445-4400.

CASE INSTITUTE IN COMMUNICATIONS SET

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) will hold its annual summer institute in communications July 29-Aug. 2 in the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

The annual communications institutes are intensive programs designed to increase communicators' skills in institutional or organizational public relations, information services, publications and periodicals editing.

Those attending may choose from among three "tracks" at the summer institute: "General Program" for those relatively new in the field of communications; "Managers' Seminar" for those assuming management positions; and "Editors' Seminar" for editors of periodicals.

Registration fee for the 4-day institute is \$650 for representatives of CASE member institutions and \$800 for persons from nonmember institutions. A \$150 deposit must accompany the registration, with full payment due by June 28.

Get more information about the institute from Lora Silsbee, CASE Summer Institute in Communications, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036.

AP NEWS JOINS UPI NEWS ON DIALCOM SYSTEM

For those agricultural communicators who were not aware, AP national and international newswires are now available electronically through the computer time-share services of ITT Dialcom Incorporated.

UPI international, national, regional and state newswires continue to be offered, too, along with news stories from the Deutsch Press Agency (DPA) and the OPEC News Agency (OPECNA).

To access these services, type "News" at the system prompt. This will give a menu of all the different UPI wires, the AP, DPA and OPECNA wires and other information services.

The AP access works a little differently than the UPI access. After selecting "15" (AP wire) from the main menu, the next recommended AP submenu selection is "4" (Business News). Then select "1" (Financial News) from the next submenu, and finally select either "1" (General Financial/Business News) or "2" (Government Economic Figures) for the final AP news submenu.

Most of AP's agricultural news stories are found under the last two submenu selections.

A shortcut in accessing UPI national agricultural news is to type "3 agriculture or agricultural" at the first prompt following display of the "News" main menu. That immediately gives you a quick search of the latest stories carrying the words agriculture or agricultural on UPI's national newswire.

One final note: All newswire files are purged at midnight Thursday. This results in only a few stories available early Friday morning. Conversely, by Thursday afternoon each week, there's quite a long string of stories available from the past seven days.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either Stan Prochaska or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 402-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or to AGR002 mailbox on the Dialcom electronic mail system, or call (202) 447-7454.

